

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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11

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 IO-10 ACDA-05 /082 W

----- 022520

R 021128Z MAY 75

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1943

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0478

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IZ, BU, HE, GE, RO, PL

SUBJ: TRAVEL TO EASTERN EUROPE BY RCC VICE CHAIRMAN SADDAM HUSSEIN

1. ACCORDING TO DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES RCC VICE CHAIRMAN SADDAM HUSSEIN IS EXPECTED TO VISIT BULGARIA, HUNGARY, EAST GERMANY AND ROMANIA DURING FIRST 15 DAYS OF MAY. HE IS EXPECTED TO RETURN TO BAGHDAD IN TIME TO RECEIVE PRESIDENT SADAT WHO IS EXPECTED TO ARRIVE ABOUT MAY 15. AS A RESULT OF SADAT VISIT, PROJECTED VISIT OF POLISH PRESIDENT FOR MAY 15 HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN POSTPONED.

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2. COMMENT: IRAQ'S RELATIONS WITH COUNTIES OF EASTERN EUROPE, AS WITH SOVIET UNION, HAVE UNDERGONE MARKED CHANGE DURING PAST TWO YEARS. PUBLICLY IRAQ HAS MAINTAINED CORDIAL "COMRADELY" RELATIONS AND ECONOMIC EXCHANGES HAVE CONTINUED AT SAME LEVEL OR RISEN SLIGHTLY. IN RELATIVE TERMS, HOWEVER, "SOCIALIST" COUNTRIES HAVE SUFFERED BADLY AS IRAQ WITH ITS NEW WEALTH HAS TURNED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY TO WEST, INCLUDING U.S., AND JAPANESE FOR VIRTUALLY ALL NEW MAJOR ECONOMIC PROJECTS. TURNABOUT BEGAN IN MARCH 1973 WHEN PACKAGE AGREEMENT WITH WESTERN OIL COMPANIES RESOLVED ALL OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS AND CLEARED PATH FOR RAPID EXPANSION OF OIL PRODUCTION. THIS GAVE IRAQ MUSCLE TO MOVE AGAINST MASSIVE PRESENCE OF SOVIET UNION AND ITS ALLIES NOT ONLY IN ECONOMIC FIELD, BUT IN MILITARY AND CULTURAL FIELDS. IN JULY 1973 IRAQ CLOSED DOWN FLOURISHING CULTURAL CENTERS OF USSR, EAST GERMANY AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA, USING AS A PRETEXT UNWILLINGNESS OF THESE COUNTRY TO GRANT RECIPROCITY. IN MILITARY FIELD, LATEST U.S. INTELLIGENCE FIGURES SHOW THAT IRAQ PURCHASED 278.7 MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF ARMS FROM NON-COMMUNIST SOURCES IN 1974 (AS OPPOSED TO 371 FROM COMMUNIST COUNTRIES). THUS SOVIET MONOPOLY AS ARMS SUPPLIER IS ALREADY IN PROCESS OF BEING BROKEN. DISCUSSIONS ARE NOW TAKING PLACE WITH FRENCH, BRITISH AND ITALIANS FOR NEW HELICOPTER FLEET. THIS WOULD BE FIRST MAJOR WEAPONS SYSTEM TO GO TO NON-COMMUNIST SOURCE.

3. MARCH 6 ACCORD WITH IRAN WHICH RESOLVED KURDISH WAR HAS REMOVED MAJOR OBSTACLE TO IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH WEST AND FURTHER UNDERMINED SOVIET BLOC POSITION.

4. OBJECTIVES OF SADDAM HUSSEIN VISITING EASTERN EUROPE COUNTRIES ARE BELIEVED THEREFORE TO BE TO SMOOTH OVER RELATIONS, LET THESE COUNTRIES KNOW THAT IRAQ STILL HAS AN INTEREST IN GOOD RELATIONS AND IN SOME OF THINGS THEY HAVE TO OFFER, AND TO MAINTAIN IRAQ'S IMAGE AS "PROGRESSIVE" REGIME. IT SHOULD ALSO BE SEEN IN CONTEXT OF REGIME'S NEW COMMITMENT TO NON-ALIGNMENT WHICH SEEMS TO BE REPLACING ARAB UNITY UNDER AEGIS OF BAAATH PARTY AS FIRST TENET OF IRAQI FOREIGN POLICY.

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4. SADAT VISIT SUBJECT OF SEPTEL.
LOWRIE

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